

NATIONAL

Clear and concise news and information vital for peace and harmony between two different societies

PAGE-2**NATIONAL**

SG Min Aung Hlaing attends ceremony to handover new building to No. 1 Latha school

PAGE-6**NATIONAL**

Rakhine State Chief Minister meets locals from Yanbye Township

PAGE-2

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. IV, No. 253, 9th Waxing of Pyatho 1379 ME

www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Tuesday, 26 December 2017



The backhoe working on the road construction in Maungtau, Rakhine State. **PHOTO: NAY WIN TUN**

Two Mayyu Mountain roads to support development in Maungtau region

TWO roads passing through Mayyu Mountain range are expected to complete before the rainy season which starts in mid-May.

The two roads are being constructed by Road Management Department, Ministry of Construction.

Commenting on the construction of the two roads, Road Management Department's Director-General U Ohn Lwin said "Our Road Department will complete two out of four Mayyu Mountain roads during this open season. The first is Zedipyin-Indin-Kyauk-

pandu road and the second is Kyeinchaung-Gopi road. Construction of these roads will support Maungtau region development."

Zedipyin-Indin-Kyaukpandu road connects Zedipyin in Yathedaung Township with Kyaukpandu in Maungtau

Township and is being constructed by Road Special team 17 and is 10 miles and 7 furlong in length. Using 26 road construction machinery, an initial 34 ft. wide earth road is being constructed and gravels 8-inch thick will be laid on top. **SEE PAGE-6**

Low-pressure persists in Andaman Sea

Seas will be moderate in Myanmar waters and wave height can reach about 4 to 7 feet in off and along Myanmar Coasts

A low-pressure area has formed in the Andaman Sea and adjoining Southeast Bay of Bengal and the weather system is likely to result in isolated rain in Taninthayi Region with 60 per cent degree of certainty today, according to the observations of the Meteorology and Hydrology Department at 7 pm M.S.T yesterday,

Weather will be partly cloudy in Bago, Yangon and Ayeyawady regions, Kachin, Shan, Kayah, Kayin and Mon states and generally fair in the remaining regions and states.

Meanwhile, the Severe Tropical Storm "Tembin" over the South China Sea and it's centered at about (140)miles South-South-east of Hochiminh(Viet Nam), according to the observations at (18:30)hrs MST yesterday, It is moving to West - Northwestwards and forecast to downgrade into a Tropical Storm.

Now, under the influence of the circulation, the low-pressure area has formed in the Andaman Sea and adjoining Southeast Bay of Bengal.

Seas will be moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (4 - 7) feet in off and along Myanmar Coasts.—GNLM



BEST BANK IN MYANMAR

Awarded by EUROMONEY 2017

Clear and concise news and information vital for peace and harmony between two different societies

UNION Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development in Rakhine (UEHRD) Vice-Chairman Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr. Win Myat Aye attended and addressed the opening ceremony of the second training course on conducting social works among societies in conflict held yesterday morning at the Social Welfare training school in Mayangon Township.

The Union Minister said conflicts are occurring in many countries of the world and conflicts are threatening our country. This is a country where differences exist but were being united and exist as a union. If the problems are resolved with union spirit, there'll be harmony among all and successes will be achieved. It is easy to achieve harmony if it is based on union spirit. There are problems that



Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye and attendees pose for a documentary photo. **PHOTO: MNA**

can be resolved within a country as well as problems that will have to be resolved among countries in the region and by working together with the countries of the world. Problems occur because there are differences between two societies. Inequalities are the source of the problems and it affects the development. Resolving the problems is the issue

of the people and people should participate in it. Those attending this training are to coordinate in obtaining peace between two different societies. There is a need to remove the suspicions and hatred between the two societies and build trust and love. Especially in order to achieve social harmony between the two societies social service person-

nel must ensure the spreading of clear and concise news and information and avoid long term conflicts. UEHRD projects are being implemented to resolve the problems existing in Rakhine State with union spirit. The aims of the union projects are to avoid long term conflicts and preventing conflicts from occurring again. There is a need for people with

experience to give training and that is why this training is being conducted. When social welfare personnel went to rural areas to serve, they are to use the social welfare knowledge they had learnt to prevent conflicts from occurring again, said the Union Minister.

Community and Family Services International (CFSI) Executive Director Mr. Steven Muncy then explained about the aim of conducting the training. The five-day training course is conducted for 30 social welfare personnel who will serve in Rakhine State. The training was implemented with a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Social Welfare Department and CFSI and similar trainings on achieving harmony in societies with conflicts and problems will be conducted in the future, it is learnt. — Myanmar News Agency ■



Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu and departmental officials inspect the construction of a new school building in Yanbye Township. **PHOTO: MNA**

Rakhine State Chief Minister and ministers meet locals from Yanbye Township

RAKHINE State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu and State ministers met with departmental and municipal officials, township elders and locals from Yanbye Township yesterday morning in Rammawaddy Hall, Yanbye town to discuss status of regional development works.

At the meeting, Rakhine State Chief Minister delivered a speech and then handed over cash assistance of Ks

26,195,000 for 5,239 education personnel serving in Kyaukpyu District to Kyaukpyu District head of education office.

The cash assistance was provided by Ministry of Education to education personnel for the FY 2017-2018.

Next, the Chief Minister inspected the construction of a new building for Yanbye Town state high school No. (2) Puloptaung school and laying of a concrete road in

U Mya Wa road in No. 4 Ward, Yanbye Town.

Afterwards, the Chief Minister met with teachers, students and parents of Yanbye Town state high school No. (1).

The Chief Minister discussed and remarked on having high percentage of success in the matriculation examination and then inspected the sites of constructing a new Yanbye Town and 150-bed hospital. — Township IPRD ■

Breakfast food donation for patients in Sittway People's Hospital, Rakhine State

CETANA Parahita Foundation and donors are jointly donating breakfast for patients in 500-bed Sittway People's Hospital every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday morning at 5:30 am. Foods donated were congee (porridge), eggs, milk, drinking water, bread, rice and curries.

Although Cetana Parahita Foundation had announced and set to donate

breakfast every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, the foundation also helped donor who want to donate breakfast on other days of the week.

Arrangements are also made for those who are interested and would like to contribute their labor in serving breakfast said U Tun Oo Kyaw of Cetana Parahita Foundation. — Win Min Soe (IPRD) ■



Donors are donating breakfast for patients in Sittway People's Hospital. **PHOTO: WIN MIN SOE**



in
Picture

Myanmar Christians celebrate Christmas

People gather outside Immanuel Baptist Church in downtown Yangon as they celebrate the Christmas on Monday in Yangon.

PHOTO: MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY

Myanmar-China sign MoU on travel sector development

MYANMAR Tourism Entrepreneurs Association and Tourism Development Commission of Hubei Province of the People's Republic of China signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Sedona Hotel, Yangon yesterday morning.

At the signing ceremony, Hubei Province Tourism Development Commission director Ms. Yan Puliu led an 8 members delegation of Hubei travel

companies and hold discussions with officials from Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, Myanmar Tourism Federation and sister associations, airline, travel and tourism companies.

Next Myanmar Tourism Entrepreneurs Association Chairman U Thet Lwin Toe and Hubei Province Tourism Development Commission director Ms. Yan Puliu signed the MoU on travel sector development of the two

countries. For the development of travel sector in Myanmar, the video of the beauty of Myanmar was shown in most provinces of China. At the ceremony, the video of the beauty of Hubei Province attracted the interest of Myanmar tourism entrepreneurs.

Myanmar Tourism Entrepreneurs Association Chairman U Thet Lwin Toe said China's economic development is 8 per cent annually and 30 per cent of

more than a billion population is middle class with spending power. As per capita income increases, there is an increase in the travel sector. Most of the people from inland, land-locked provinces of China mostly visit beaches and coastal areas.

Furthermore study visit to areas of interest for travel in Hubei Province will be made in order to let the outbound travellers from Myanmar know of those

travel destinations and Chinese tourism officials will be invited to visit the cultural, natural and coastal areas of Myanmar added the Chairman U Thet Lwin Toe.

Travel promotions and Road Shows are planned in both countries and chartered flight will also be arranged while efforts are made to provide not only e-visa but also visa-on-arrival, according to the meeting.—Aung Thuya



SEAMASTER
AQUA TERRA

Ω
OMEGA

OMEGA Boutique:
Sule Square, Sule Shangri-La Hotel
Yangon Tel: + 95 9765117001
AVAILABLE AT:
Swiss Time Square No. 99, KaBarAye
Pagoda Road Yangon Tel: +95 1 540189

GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

ACTING CHIEF EDITORAye Min Soe,
ce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com**EXPATRIATE CONSULTANT EDITOR**Mark Angeles,
markangeles@gmail.com**SENIOR EDITORIAL CONSULTANT**

Kyaw Myaing

SENIOR TRANSLATORSKhin Maung Oo,
editor2@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Khin Maung Win (Chief Proof Reader),
Zaw Min, zawmin.gnln@gmail.com**INTERNATIONAL NEWS EDITOR**Ye Htut Tin,
editor1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com**LOCAL NEWS EDITORS**Tun Tun Naing (Editor),
intlnews@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Nwe Nwe Tun (Sub-editor),
nwenwe9131@gmail.com**TRANSLATORS**Khaing Thanda Lwin,
Hay Mar Tin Win,
Ei Myat Mon
Zaw Htet Oo
Kyaw Zin Lin
Kyaw Zin Tun**REPORTERS**May Thet Hnin,
reporter1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
mayreporter.mm@gmail.com**PHOTOGRAPHER**

Kyaw Zeya Win @ Phoe Khwar

COMPUTER TEAMTun Zaw (Chief of Computer Team),
Thein Ngwe, Zaw Zaw Aung,
Ye Naing Soe, Nyi Zaw Moe,
Hnin Pwint, Kay Khaing Win,
Sanda Hnin, Zu Zin Hnin**EDITORIAL SECTION**(+95) (01) 8604529,
Fax – (+95) (01) 8604305**CIRCULATION & DISTRIBUTION**San Lwin, (+95) (01) 8604532,
Hotline - 09 974424114**ADVERTISING & MARKETING**(+95) (01) 8604530,
Hotline - 09 974424848
marketing@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
subscription@globalnewlightofmyanmar.comPrinted and published at the **Global New Light of Myanmar Printing Factory** at No.150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, by the **Global New Light of Myanmar Daily** under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Publishing Permit No. 00629.

gnlmdaily@gmail.com

www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

www.facebook.com/

globalnewlightofmyanmar

Write for usWe appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit editorials, analyses or reports please email ce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com with your name and title.

Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish "Letter to the Editor" that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

Union minister inspects road and bridge construction in Ayeyawady

UNION Minister for Construction, Electricity and Energy U Win Khaing inspected road and bridge project for delta area development and upgrading of Maubin-Kyaiklat-Pyapon road.

Union Minister U Win Khaing and his party inspected the Maubin-Kyaiklat-Pyapon road which is upgraded using of Lime Stabilization system to meet the international standard and making bridge's beam and attaching the beam for U-yin creek bridge which is constructed by Shwe Taung company.

Then, Union Minister and party inspected the situation of the upgrading of concrete road in Maubin-Kyaiklat road and two lanes concrete Bailey bridge.

At noon, Union Minister and his group inspected the upgrading of concrete road between mileposts 16/7 and 17/1 on Pyapon – Bogale



Union Minister U Win Khaing inspects upgrading of Maubin-Kyaiklat-Pyapon road in Ayeyawady Region. **PHOTO: MNA**

road and Bogale -Setsan-Htawpaing-Ahmar road which is including the project in Ayeyawady delta area development and Thakanchaung bridge project.

In the evening, the Union

Mister and his staff inspected Setsan Bridge and Bogale-Mawlamyinegyun -Kyaungkadone-Wakema-Myaungmya road and Sawkae bridge.

And, Union Minister and his

cabinet inspected the upgrading project along Pyapon-Bogale road and Hlaingthaya-Twintay- Kawmu-Kungyangon-De-daye-Pyapon road, it is learnt.—

MNA ■

Christmas prayer ceremony in Pyinmana

CHRISTIAN conventions in Pyinmana Town, Nay Pyi Taw jointly held a Christmas prayer ceremony in Myanmar Baptists Convention and Asho Chin Baptist Church in Pyinmana Town, Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

Those attending the ceremony sang together religious songs, read the Bible and pray.

The Christian followers also listened to the sermons and prayers of the Reverends and Fathers. —Myanmar News Agency ■



Christians pray at Asho Chin Baptist Church in Pyinmana, Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

The Heritage Hotel Kempinski Yangon to be opened in 2018

THE Heritage Hotel Kempinski Yangon which is located on the Stand Road in Kyauktada township will be opened in 2018, according to a report in the Myawady Daily Yesterday.

The turning of over 90-year-old building into a 5-star hotel faced opposition from the Lawyears Net-work. Currently, the construction of

inside parts of hotel is nearing complete. The outside of hotels is underway.

Flying Tiger Engineering Company has got the permission from Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) for the renovation of old building. The company has already paid premium fees of US\$ 14.4 million for land use.

The company also agreed

to pay five per cent of the monthly tax income after the renovation of hotel.

The Flying Tiger Engineering Company hires the building under a 50-year contract.

The company will operate the hotel under a joint-venture agreement with a Singapore company.

Kempinski Company was

established in 1897 and now manages a set of 77 five-star hotels and residence in 33 countries and continues to add new hotels in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia and The Americas. It has opened Kempinski Hotel Nay Pyi Taw in Myanmar.

The old building is decorated as ancient system, it is learnt.—GNLM ■

MRF exploring new export market with increasing rice production

WITH rice production increasing, Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF) is making efforts to gain new markets, according to yesterday's report of Myanma Alin.

According to statistics of Agriculture Department, there were 2.46 million acres of rain and summer paddy last FY. About 10 million tons of paddies are in surplus after discarding paddy seeds for next cultivation season, wastages and consumption. The rice is exported only if there is a glut of rice in the local market, said the merchants.

We need to make adjustment between local market and export market. We have to control the local market not to scale up the rice price when the export volume increases. We must consider the whole supply and demand chain in-

cluding the farmers, millers and consumers, said U Ye Min Aung, official from MRF.

About 2.5 million tons of rice and broken rice is likely to be exported to foreign trade partners in current fiscal year. We will also manage to control the local rice price, he added.

This FY has more than 17.7 million acres of paddy throughout the year across the country. There are more than 5 million acres of paddy in Ayeyawady, 2.9 million acres in Bago Region and 2.1 million acres in Sagaing Region, according to the Agriculture Department.

U Yan Naing Tun, the director-general of the Trade Department said that we inquire the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation for rice supply and they responds that there is a self-sufficiency

in the country.

About 1,308 million baskets of paddies were produced in 2016-2017 FY and 58 per cent of supply is from Ayeyawady, Bago and Sagaing regions. The growers extended paddy cultivation as a substitution of pulses. Also, there are 150,000 acres of paddies under contract farming in cooperation with farmers. Therefore, export volume is expected to increase this FY.

About 2.2 million tons of rice and broken rice were exported to foreign countries from 1st April to 1st December, with estimated earnings of US\$673 million.

This figure is up by 1.4 million tons compared to that in similar period of last FY. This FY earns US\$421 million more than last FY. -Zar Lin Thu (AMIA) ■

High price of onion seeds led to small acres of cultivation in Nay Pyi Taw

INCREASE in double price for onion seeds this year has prompted the onion growers to turn to other crops and resulted in decrease of winter onion cultivation acres in Tatkon Township, Nay Pyi Taw, according to yesterday's report of Myanma Alin.

At present, there are only 300 acres of onion whereas there were over 500 acres of onion in the similar period of last year. The drop in onion cultivation land is attributed to the high price of seeds and shortage of water supply for summer crops in some townships. We would like to request the government to provide sufficient irrigation water supply to the farm lands to extend the cultivation areas, said U Gyi Myint, an onion grower.

More than 2,000 acres of onion cultivation are yearly found in Tatkon, Dekkhinathiri, Lewe, Ottarathiri, Pobbathiri, Pyinmana

and Zabuthiri townships. Winter onion cultivation accounts for 1,300 acres. The onion seeds fetch Ks100,000 per small basket (similar to eight condensed milk cans). Some growers cannot afford to buy onion seeds and so, they have to buy the seeds under short-term loan system. In this system, the price increases up to Ks110,000 per small basket.

If a small basket of seeds is broadcasted, it can cover around 10-15 acres of land. Additionally there is another method of onion cultivation from onion bulb.

Onions are highly demanded by local consumers. They are exported to foreign countries when there is a glut in the market. Onion production was recorded at 1.1 million tons in 2013-2014 FY, 1.25 million tons in 2014-2015 FY and 2015-2016 FY. Last FY saw onion productions of 1.15 million tons. -Zar Lin Thu (AMIA) ■

LUNCH SALAD BAR



Loa Seine
All Day Dining & Buffet

USD 7⁺⁺ / Person
Get one main course, and enjoy our salad bar at USD 3⁺⁺

Breakfast Buffet	: \$19 ⁺⁺ per adult	Service Hours	: 6:00 am ~ 10:00 pm	Location	: Hotel Building, B1F
Dinner Buffet	: \$29 ⁺⁺ per adult	Breakfast Buffet	: 6:00 am ~ 10:00 am	For Reservation:	
(Sunday - Thursday)		Lunch	: 11:30 am ~ 2:30 pm	Hotel Tel	: 01-9351000 (Ext : 1525)
A La Carte Menu	: Starting from \$5	Dinner Buffet	: 6:00 pm ~ 10:00 pm	Restaurant Tel	: 01-9351053

LOTTE
HOTELS & RESORTS

No. 82, Sin Phyu Shin Avenue, Pyay Road, 6½ Mile, Ward 11, Hlaing Township, Yangon, Myanmar. Tel: +95-01-9351000 Web: www.lottehotel.com/yangon



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing presents gifts to the teacher in person. **PHOTO: MNA**

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing attends ceremony to handover new building to No. 1 Latha school

A ceremony to transfer a four-story school building in Basic Education High School No. 1 Latha (BEHS 1 Latha) was held yesterday in the school in Latha Township, Yangon yesterday afternoon and was attended by Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Yangon Command commander, officials from Ministry of Education, headmaster, teachers, former students, students and donors.

First, Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief opened the new school building by pressing a button and then sprinkled scented waters on the commemorative plaque. Next, he delivered a short speech explaining the reason for donating

the new school building.

Afterwards, U Tun Aung Hlaing, chairman of the Old Students Association transferred the new school building to Saymagyi Daw Myint Myint Than, Director of Planning and Finance from the Basic Education Department, Yangon Region.

Cartoon U Sein Gyi of the Post-war (Second World War) Old Students Association presented the Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief with a commemorative painting.

Earlier in the day, former students of (Central) BEHS 1 Latha who attended the school from 1965 to 1985 held their Sil-

ver Anniversary of paying respects to their teachers in the school's central hall.

65 teachers were present for the ceremony to pay respects to teachers by former students who had attended the school from 1965 to 1985 together with Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing who attended the school from middle school to high school. Sayagyi U Aye Thein delivered a speech on behalf of the teachers who were paid respects.

Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief and former students then presented gifts to the teachers in person it is learnt. — Myanmar News Agency ■

Correction

Please read “BPI” instead of “MPF” in the story “MPF conducting research to produce ten more new products this FY” on page 5 of yesterday’s edition of the Global New Light of Myanmar.—Ed

Two Mayyu Mountain roads to support development in Maungtaw region

FROM PAGE-1

Afterwards, 18 ft. wide concrete road will be laid on top of the gravel layer. A total of 75 bridges are also being planned to be built along this road.

The second Mayyu Mountain road is the Kyeinchaung-Gopi road. The road which is being constructed by Road Special team 17 is on the northern part of Maungtaw region.

It is 15 miles long and the construction is being undertaken with 15 road laying vehicles. A total of 52 bridges of various sizes are also being planned to be built along this road. An initial 34 ft. wide road is being constructed

and then will have gravels 8-inch thick laid on top. And then, there'll be 18 ft. wide concrete road on top of it all.

Mayyu Mountain range faces the Bay of Bengal and Naf River and ran from north to south. As such, even though Buthidaung, Maungtaw and Yathedaung townships border each other, the Mayyu Mountain range is like a natural obstacle between them.

The roads will connect the eastern and western part of the mountain range allowing more transport and communications which will support the development, security and peace of the region.—Myint Maung, Zeya ■

Russia, UN sign project services for feasibility study for renovation, capacity improvement of Sao San Htun hospital



H.E. Mr. Nikolay A. Listopadov, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, and Mr. Andrew Kirkwood, Director and Representative of UNOPS in Myanmar, signed yesterday in Yangon Contribution Agreement between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and the United Nations Office for Project Services concerning feasibility study for the renovation and capacity improvement of the

Sao San Htun hospital, Taunggyi project Myanmar.

Under Agreement the Russian Side will contribute over USD 187 000 to conduct a feasibility study for the Sao San Htun hospital. UNOPS will also monitor the Feasibility Study carried out by the hired firm, as well as present the findings to the Donor, Ministry of Health and Sports of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Authorities of the Sao San Htun hospital.—GNLM ■



in
Picture

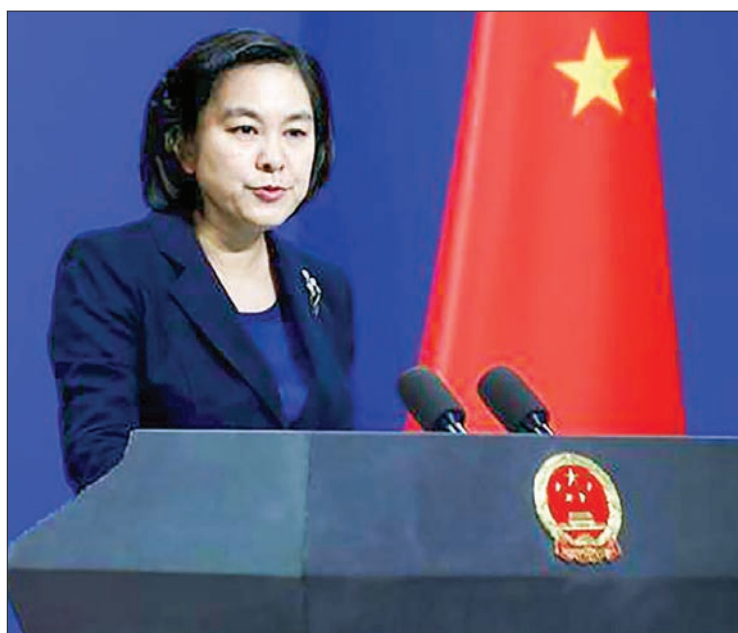
A man dressed as Santa Claus places a Christmas hat on a child at Ocean Super Centre in Bahan, Yangon, yesterday. **PHOTO: MARK ANGELES**

China calls for constructive efforts to ease Korean tensions

BEIJING — China called on Monday for all countries to make constructive efforts to ease tension after North Korea said the latest UN sanctions against it are an act of war and tantamount to a complete economic blockade.

The UN Security Council unanimously imposed new sanctions on North Korea on Friday for its recent intercontinental ballistic missile test, seeking to limit its access to refined petroleum products and crude oil and its earnings from workers abroad.

The US-drafted resolution also caps crude oil supplies to North Korea at 4 million barrels a year and commits the Council to further reductions if it were to conduct another nuclear test or launch another intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM).



Hua Chunying, spokeswoman of China's Foreign Ministry. PHOTO: REUTERS

North Korea on Sunday rejected the resolution, calling it an act of war.

Speaking in Beijing, Chi-

nese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said the resolution appropriately strengthened the sanctions but

was not designed to affect ordinary people, normal economic exchanges and cooperation, or humanitarian aid.

Hua noted it also called for the use of peaceful means to resolve the issue and that all sides should take steps to reduce tension.

"In the present situation, we call on all countries to exercise restraint and make proactive and constructive efforts to ease the tensions on the peninsula and appropriately resolve the issue," she told a daily news briefing.

The North's old allies China and Russia both supported the latest UN sanctions.

Tension has been rising over North Korea's nuclear and missile programmes, which it pursues in defiance of years of UN Security Council resolutions, with bellicose rhetoric

coming from both Pyongyang and the White House.

In November, North Korea demanded a halt to what it called "brutal sanctions", saying a round imposed after its sixth and most powerful nuclear test on 3 September constituted genocide.

North Korea on 29 November said it successfully tested a new ICBM that put the US mainland within range of its nuclear weapons.

US diplomats have made clear they are seeking a diplomatic solution but proposed the new, tougher sanctions resolution to ratchet up pressure on North Korea's leader.

China, with which North Korea does some 90 per cent of its trade, has repeatedly called for calm and restraint from all sides and for a return to talks. —Reuters ■

Philippines' Duterte's son quits as vice mayor of hometown Davao

MANILA — Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte's eldest son quit as vice mayor of the southern city of Davao on Monday, citing his being linked to a drug smuggling case by opponents and personal problems from a failed marriage as reasons for the move.

Paolo Duterte announced his resignation during a special session of the Davao City Council. Davao is President Duterte's hometown and its mayor is Paolo's younger sister, Sara Duterte-Carpio.

"There are recent unfortunate events in my life that are closely tied to my failed first

marriage," the vice mayor said, in a statement made available to media.

"These, among others, include the maligning of my reputation in the recent name dropping incident in the Bureau of Customs' smuggling case and the very public squabble with my daughter."

Paolo testified at a senate investigation in September into a seized shipment of around \$125 million worth of narcotics from China after opponents of the president, who has instigated a fierce crackdown on the drugs trade, said they believe his



Paolo Duterte, Davao's Vice Mayor and son of President Rodrigo Duterte, testifies at a Senate hearing on drug smuggling in Pasay, Metro Manila, Philippines on 7 September, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

son may have helped ease the entry of the shipment at the port in Manila, the Philippine capital. Paolo has denied any involvement.

More recently, he has been involved in an online spat with Isabelle, his 15-year-old daughter from his first wife. Paolo has called her "embarrassing" on Facebook after she complained on Twitter about being treated badly by her father.

The president's office, the mayor's office and other members of Paolo's family did not immediately respond to Reuters' requests for comments. —Reuters ■

North Korea says new UN sanctions an act of war

BEIJING/SEOUL — The latest UN sanctions against North Korea are an act of war and tantamount to a complete economic blockade against it, North Korea's foreign ministry said on Sunday, threatening to punish those who supported the measure.

The UN Security Council unanimously imposed new sanctions on North Korea on Friday for its recent intercontinental ballistic missile test, seeking to limit its access to refined petroleum products and crude oil and its earnings from workers abroad.

The UN resolution seeks to ban nearly 90 per cent of refined petroleum exports to North Korea by capping them at 500,000 barrels a year and, in a last-minute change, demands the repatriation of North Koreans working abroad within 24 months, instead of 12 months as first proposed.

The US-drafted resolution also caps crude oil supplies to North Korea at 4 million barrels a year and commits the Council to further reductions if it were to conduct another nuclear test or launch another ICBM.

In a statement carried by the official KCNA news agency, North Korea's foreign ministry said the United States was terrified by its nuclear force and was getting "more and more frenzied in the moves to impose the harshest-ever sanctions and pressure on our country".

The new resolution was tantamount to a complete economic blockade of North Korea, the ministry said.

"We define this 'sanctions resolution' rigged up by the US and its followers as a grave in-

fringement upon the sovereignty of our Republic, as an act of war violating peace and stability in the Korean peninsula and the region and categorically reject the 'resolution'," it said.

"There is no more fatal blunder than the miscalculation that the US and its followers could check by already worn-out 'sanctions' the victorious advance of our people who have brilliantly accomplished the great historic cause of completing the state nuclear force", the ministry said.

North Korean leader Kim

Jong Un on 29 November declared the nuclear force complete after the test of North Korea's largest-ever ICBM test, which the country said puts all of the United States within range.

Kim told a meeting of members of the ruling Workers' Party on Friday that the country "successfully realized the historic cause of completing the state nuclear force" despite "short supply in everything and manifold difficulties and ordeals owing to the despicable anti-DPRK moves of the enemies". —Reuters ■

We need to be worthy of independence

“AFTER we gain Independence, even though we implement a variety of Plans, we may need to work for 20 years – if I may use coarse language, we will need to work really hard till we split up at the seams. We will really get somewhere only after working with all our might and strength straining our backs” That was an excerpt from the speech made by our national leader Bogyoke Aung San at the mass meeting held in front of the City Hall in Yangon on 13th July 1947. The speech never failed to impress the people then, as well as the generations that came later. These words of Bogyoke Aung San touched the depths of our hearts. At the mass meeting, Bogyoke spoke at length, concerning the Parliament, guarantee of achieving Independence within one year and warning people to work hard so that all the people would be worthy of Independence, after gaining Independence. That was the last

speech made by Bogyoke Aung San.

Being a nation which had to be rehabilitated from zero, Myanmar needs to move forward 4, 5 or 10 steps more than others. That is to say, Myanmar needs to work 4, 5 or 10 times much more than others. We need to be united and work with zealous efforts and enthusiasm for national development. Bogyoke Aung San gave us his speech with unforgettable words. One week after delivering his last speech at the mass meeting, Bogyoke Aung San and other national leaders were assassinated. In a few months after the fall of Bogyoke,

our country gained its Independence.

With the political split which was conceived since before gaining Independence, civil wars, disunity, conflicts, fall of parliament democracy and scourges of centralism, a period of nearly half a century must be said to be stormy years. During those years we were not able to build up unity. Not to mention moving 4, 5 or 10 steps forward for national development, we went astray from the right path, lagging much behind other countries which were behind us in the past, as a result. It will certainly take us more than 20 years to keep pace with others even though we work excessively hard.

Our country has been a sovereign nation for the past 70 years. During the past years, we have had events of glamour and pride as well as events from which lessons must be taken. Now we ourselves are writing history. It is our historical duty to protect our Union and sovereignty, to build up a Federal Democratic Republic, to end armed conflicts which were evil legacies of the past and to implement nationwide eternal peace, socio-economic development for all citizens, with unity, zealous efforts and with discipline. ■

Invisible Intrusions and Independence

By Saw Myo Nwe

A scar that cannot be erased forever

I STILL remember an event which occurred to me when I paid a visit to my granny's village, accompanying my mother. While riding my uncle's bike sitting on the back carrier, my left leg got accidentally put into the spokes of the bike's back wheel. Without knowing what had happened to me, I cried out loud as it greatly hurt me to stop uncle's riding. Till then, my leg was still between spokes and the bike-rest.

Uncle rushed to the health assistant's house in the village, carrying me on his back, leaving the bike there. After cleansing the wound and dressing it, I ceased to cry out. It took me over one month to have healed the injury. But the scar will accompany me to the time of going to the graveyard.

The event shows me that the period it occurred lasted only for a few seconds, but I had to cry out loud out of great pain and it took me over one month to have healed it. Moreover, the scar will remain on my leg forever.

Seeing is believing, but----

Someone may find it difficult to believe how severe my pain was. Similarly, if someone is warned to be careful in riding a bike on the back carrier, he may otherwise be careful about the warning. That is because he may not accept such a warning as long as he had not experienced such an accident, and because "Seeing is Believing," as the saying goes."

And, time can make events unclear. We ourselves tend to forget throes we suffered in the past. True to nature, I myself have nearly forgotten the scar I got and the scourge I suffered. Usually, the bereaved ones will forget the deceased.

It is not strange to do so because it may be an infinitesimal affair for a human being throughout his life as it is concerned with only one person. For doing so, it will never hurt anyone else. Provided that it will be concerned with the whole national populace, situations will go completely different.

It will reach exactly 70 years that our country gained its Independence it lost. It is similar to a life-span of a human being. In the country we have only a few people who had met the colonial



The statue of King Thibaw and Queen Suphayalat seen at Mandalay Royal Palace. PHOTO: NYIZAW MOE

rule. Most were born just after gaining Independence. We can get the knowledge of living under the colonial rule and experiences of fighting for the Independence only through the perusal of others' recounts and writings. Here, we must note down that these are not imaginary legends and invented stories. Our Independence was achieved just after sacrificing lots of lives and depredation. If so, we will learn to admire the value of the Independence. And, it is incumbent upon us to value

and protect our hard-won Independence.

Truths in the history

Looking back into the long history concerning the British Imperialism due to interventions into the affairs of Assam and Manipur and occupation of Shinmaphyu Island fighting started. In 1824 March 5, the Governor General of India Lord Amherst declared war against Myanmar, operating First Anglo-Burma War. According to the contract "Ranta-

bo" Myanmar had to abandon Rakhine and Taninthari regions.

The British Imperialists staged the Second Anglo-Burma War on 5 April 1852 without prior notice, announcing that they had occupied the Lower Myanmar King 20th December 1852. The British targeted to expel Myanmar King out of the country, to make the whole Myanmar populace live under their strict control and to get rid of Myanmar Kingdom and Myanmar nationalities out of the world atlas. On the wrong pretext



Saya Chone's "King Thibaw Leaving Mandalay".

of the Case of Smuggling teaks from Bombay Burma Company, they declared the Third Anglo-Burma War on 11th November 1885.

On November 28, 1885, they deposed King Thibaw, taking the King and his royal family out of the country, by Thuriya Liner at 5:45 pm on November 29. Those periods were the ones we had to give away our sovereignty. On January 1 1886, Lord Dufferin, the Viceroy of India announced that the Burmese King was under the British rule, and territories of Myanmar were annexed in British India.

Compared to long history of Myanmar, those periods were very short. But, the then Myanmar people's sufferings were actually severe. Here, we must note that we will lose our Independence and sovereignty in a short period of time provided that we lack ability to protect our Independence achieved and unless we have unity.

Time and efforts we have sacrificed

It was found that the national populaces launched political and military operations against the British Imperialist forces since the end of First Anglo-Burma War. To gain the Independence which was lost in a short period of time, it took our forefathers for

over a century. During these periods, they exploited Myanmar's natural resources excessively. They arranged to make Myanmar deprived of educational and social status. Since then, they committed violations of human rights so much so that all global communities blamed them. The worst thing was that they ruled the country under divide and rule system so that misunderstanding and unity could be ruined among the national brethren.

According to their conspiracy, they sent King Thibaw and royal families to Madras, India thence to Yadanar Giri, imprisoning them to the demise. With a view to adulterating the royal lineage, they conspired to make their plans to be successful. Yet, they could not manage to make Myanmar Populace live under their strict control. They could not suppress Myanmar people's patriotism. Whatever it is, we had sacrificed our ancestor's lives for ages to gain Independence.

Present era and Independence

The British ruled Myanmar by staging wars for three times. Nowadays, military intrusions were operated only under unavoidable conditions. But we must notice that they are trying to attack in every way so that their interventions cannot be noticed. We must have the capability of seeing their interventions in various spheres such as political, economic, social, diplomat and propaganda sectors, by comparing events taking places across the world. These kinds of interventions are more effective military interventions. Their methods are too sober and delicate to be noticed. Only if sovereignty is strengthened, can the country be called an independent nation. Had sovereignty been harmed its Independence is tantamount to being threatened. Accordingly, sphere for protecting Independence is broader than sphere for defending against military aggression.

To sum it up, we hereby urge our national brethren to protect our country from all interventions in unity and strength by taking lessons from previous bitter experiences experienced in the past for eternal longevity of Myanmar's Independence. ■

Translated by Khin Maung Oo

Sumatran Rhinos Could Go Extinct, But It's Not Entirely Our Fault

Danica Simic

SUMATRAN rhinos are one of the most endangered animal species in the world. These plant-eating animals originate from the order Perissodactyla and can reach a shoulder height of 3.67 to 4.76 feet. It's not hard to recognize the species. They have two skin folds which encircle the body around the legs and trunk area. Two horns are located on the snout, with the frontal horn being larger and more visible compared to the nasal one. According to a group of scientists from the U.S., the problems concerning the extinction of these mammals had started during the last Ice Age, as their habitat got smaller. After that, it was human impact that affected the number of living rhinos, now counting fewer than 250 left in the wilderness. They conducted a study which was published in the journal Current Biology

"Our genome sequence data revealed that the Pleistocene was a roller-coaster ride for Sumatran rhinoceros populations," said Herman Mays, Kr., from Marshall University in the press release.

"This species has been well on its way to extinction for a very long time" Terri Roth of the Center for Conservation and Research of Endangered Wildlife at the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden, added.

The Pleistocene is the time in terms of geology, a period between 2,588,000 to 11,700 years ago, during the latest Ice Age. The researchers have been sequencing and analyzing the first whole genomewhich belongs to the well-known Sumatran rhino male, Ipuh, located at the Cincinnati Zoo.

Ipuh had been at the zoo since the 1990s, but unfortunately, his life ended four years ago when he was 33. Ipuh provided three offspring, which is more than compared to other Sumatran rhinos in the world. His genetic material has been moved into a gene bank. Scientists used Ipuh's DNA to get the population history of Sumatran rhinos.

According to the scientists, the population of this species numbered almost 60,000 individuals roughly 950,000 years ago. However, around 12,000 years ago marked the end of the Pleistocene time, which means that rhinos lost a great part of their natural habitat, similar to other large mammals.

Due to climate changes, by 9,000 years ago the number of individuals continued dropping, and showed no signs of recovery.

"Their population bottomed out and never showed signs of recovery," Professor Mays said. "The Sumatran rhinoceros species is hanging on by a thread," Dr. Roth said. "We need to do more to save it."

The Sumatran rhinos once lived on the foothills of the Himalayas in Bhutan and north-eastern India, even through southern China, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, and the Malay Peninsula. The animal also roamed the islands of Sumatra and Borneo in Indonesia.

The species now mainly live in Sumatra and are considered Critically Endangered by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Right now, there are over 20 Sumatran rhinos that are kept in captivity, mainly located in Indonesia and Malaysia, while a few of them are located in the U.S. ■

Sergei
Mironov. PHOTO:
TASSWORLD
BRIEFS

Russia's Lavrov says
timing of Putin-Trump
meeting not yet
discussed – RIA

MOSCOW – The timing of the next meeting of Russian President Vladimir Putin and US President Donald Trump has not yet been discussed, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told RIA news agency in an interview on Monday.

"The timings of the next personal meeting have not yet been discussed," he said. —Reuters ■

China sets yuan
midpoint at strongest
level in over 3 months

SHANGHAI – China's central bank on Monday set its official yuan midpoint at the highest level in over three months at 6.5683 per dollar, reflecting strong spot yuan performance on Friday.

Monday's official midpoint, 138 pips or 0.21 per cent firmer than Friday's fix of 6.5821 per dollar, was the strongest since 20 September. —Reuters ■

Peru's president
pardons ex-leader
Fujimori, citing his
health

LIMA – Peruvian President Pedro Pablo Kuczynski pardoned former authoritarian leader Alberto Fujimori late on Sunday, clearing him of convictions for human rights crimes and graft before completion of a 25-year prison sentence.

Kuczynski's office said in a statement that a medical review showed that Fujimori, 79, who governed Peru from 1990 to 2000, suffered from "a progressive, degenerative and incurable disease." The pardon comes just days after a faction of Fujimori's supporters in the opposition-controlled Congress saved Kuczynski from a motion that would have forced him from office in the wake of a graft scandal. —Reuters ■

Just Russia party not to nominate its candidate for president, to support Putin

MOSCOW — The Just Russia party will not nominate its candidate for Russian president but will support the candidature of incumbent President Vladimir Putin, the party's leader, Sergei Mironov, said on Sunday.

"The Just Russia party will not nominate its candidate, we will support Vladimir Putin's candidature," he told journalists after a meeting of the party's Central Council Presidium.

"The presidium has passed a political decision and this decision will be tomorrow recommended to the congress," he said. "I am sure the congress will support it."

According to Mironov, few have doubts that Putin win the upcoming elections. "This candidate is the winner. So, if we know the outcome beforehand, why should we nominate our candidate to be in the company

of outsiders enjoying miserable support," he said. "We are a socialist party and three basic decisions of the president of the past six months are literally our party's program provisions. He hears us, we see the tendency."

He said that his party's representatives would be commissioned to Putin's election headquarters to help work "on the future agenda." "If the party's congress decides to support

Putin, it will mean that two out of four parliamentary parties are going to support the incumbent president," Mironov said.

Nevertheless, the Just Russia leader vowed his party would stay in opposition to the ruling United Russia party. The party congress that is to pass this decision will be held in Moscow on 25 December. Presidential elections in Russia are scheduled for 18 March, 2018. —Tass ■

Pentagon must give access to American detained in Iraq — US judge

WASHINGTON — A federal judge has ordered the Trump administration to give the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) access to an American suspected of fighting for Islamic State and held in secret US military detention in Iraq for more than three months.

In a ruling issued late on Saturday, US District Court Judge Tanya Chutkan denied a government request to dismiss an ACLU challenge to the

unidentified man's detention, rejecting the claim that the organization has no standing in the matter.

Chutkan ruled that the Defense Department should provide the ACLU with "temporary, immediate and unmonitored access" to the man to determine if he wants the organization to pursue a habeas corpus petition on his behalf and provide him with legal advice.

Using such a petition, a person can ask a court to review the legality of their detention.

The man surrendered in mid-September to US-backed Syrian Kurdish fighters pursuing an offensive against Islamic State's former stronghold of Raqqa, in northeaster Syria. He was turned over to the US military, which classified him as an "enemy combatant," and transferred him to a secret

location in Iraq, according to Chutkan's ruling.

Aside from two visits by the International Committee of the Red Cross, the detainee has had contact only with US government officials, according to the ruling. The judge pointed out that in a 30 November brief, the Defence Department disclosed that in an interview with FBI agents, the detainee said that he felt that he wanted an attorney present. —Reuters ■

Islamic State claims blast at Afghan intelligence agency in Kabul

KABUL — Islamic State claimed responsibility for a suicide attack on a compound of Afghanistan's national intelligence agency in Kabul on Monday, that killed at least five people and wounded two.

The blast comes a week after the group claimed an attack on a training facility of the same agency, the National Directorate for Security, in Kabul that ended when the attackers were killed before causing significant casualties.

In a statement issued through the group's Amaq news agency, Islamic State said it was also behind Monday's attack.

In Kabul, security officials said the explosion was caused by a suicide bomber who approached the agency's entrance on foot before blowing himself

up. All the casualties reported were of civilian passersby.

Najib Danish, a spokesman for the interior ministry, said at least five people had been killed and two wounded.

Islamic State's local affiliate, which first appeared in eastern Afghanistan near the border with Pakistan in early 2015, has become increasingly active and has claimed several recent suicide attacks in Kabul.

It has frequently fought Taliban militants and has been heavily targeted by US air strikes and Special Forces operations in its main stronghold in Nangarhar province.

But there remains considerable uncertainty about how the group operates and the exact nature of its connections with Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. —Reuters ■



Afghan security forces keep watch at a check point close to a compound of Afghanistan's national intelligence agency in Kabul, Afghanistan on 25 December, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Israel praises Guatemala over Jerusalem embassy move

JERUSALEM/GUATEMALA CITY — Guatemalan President Jimmy Morales drew praise from Israeli officials on Monday for deciding to relocate the Central American country's embassy to Jerusalem, a move in step with US policy in a dispute over the city's status.

In a short post on his official Facebook account on Sunday, Morales said he had decided to move the embassy from Tel Aviv after talking to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

US President Donald Trump recognised Jerusalem as the capital of Israel on 6 December, reversing decades of US policy and upsetting the Arab world and Western allies.

On Thursday, 128 countries defied Trump by backing a non-binding UN General Assembly resolution calling on the United States to drop its recognition of Jerusalem.

"I congratulate my friend (Morales) on his bold decision to move his country's embassy in Israel to Jerusalem," Israeli Parliamentary Speaker Yuli Edelstein wrote on Twitter. "Your decision proves that you and your country are true friends of Israel."

Guatemala and neighbouring Honduras were two of only a handful of countries to join Israel and the United States, which has pledged to move its embassy to Jerusalem, in voting against the UN resolution.

Israel's ambassador to Guatemala, Matty Cohen, said on Army Radio that no date had been set for the embassy move, "but it will happen after" the United States relocates its own embassy to Jerusalem. US officials have said that move could take at least two years.

The United States is an important source of assistance to Guatemala and Honduras, and Trump had threatened to cut off financial aid to countries that supported the UN resolution.

Israeli Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked, writing on Twitter, thanked Morales for what she described as "his courageous decision". She said she was confident that other countries would follow his lead.

The status of Jerusalem is one of the thorniest obstacles to an Israeli-Palestinian peace deal. Palestinians want East Jerusalem as the capital of a state they want to establish in the occupied West Bank and in the Gaza Strip.—Reuters ■

Syrian, Iranian backed forces advance in border area near Israel

AMMAN — Syrian army forces backed by Iranian-backed militias pushed deeper into the last rebel-held enclave near a strategic border area with Israel and Lebanon in a new expansion of Tehran's influence in the war-torn country.

The army and the Shi'ite forces advanced east and south of the Sunni-rebel held bastion of Beit Jin backed by some of the heaviest aerial bombing and heavy artillery shelling since a major assault began over two months ago to seize the area, rebels said.

The Syrian army said it had encircled the village of Mughr al Meer at the foothills of Mount Hermon as troops moved toward Beit Jin amid fierce clashes.

The enclave is the last rebel bastion left in the south west of Damascus known as the Western Ghouta that had since last year fallen under government control after months of heavy bombing on civilian areas and years of siege tactics that forced rebels to surrender.

A western intelligence source confirmed rebel reports that Iranian-backed militias including the powerful Lebanese Hezbollah Shi'ite group were playing a major role in the ongoing battles.

"The Iranian backed militias are trying to consolidate their sphere of influence all the way from southwest of Damascus to the Israeli border," said Suhaib al Ruhail, an official from the Liwa al Furqan rebel group that operates in the area.

Worried by Iran's expanding influence in Syria after the defeat of Islamic State, Israel has in the last few weeks stepped up its strikes against suspected Iranian targets inside Syria.

Early this month an Israeli strike on a base near Kiswah, south of Damascus was widely believed to be an Iranian military compound, according to a Western intelligence source.

Israel has been lobbying both big powers to deny Iran, Lebanon's Hezbollah and other Shi'ite militias any permanent bases in Syria, and to keep them away from the Golan, as they gain ground while helping Damascus beat back Sunni-led rebels.

The southwest of Syria is part of a de-escalation zone in southern Syria agreed last July between Russia and Washington, the first such understanding between the two powers.

The area has not seen Russian bombing unlike other cease-fire areas in Syria.

Diplomatic sources say several thousand Shi'ite fighters who have been amassing from outside the Quneitra province are pitted against hundreds of Islamist and mainstream Free Syria Army (FSA) rebels closing ranks under the banner of Itihad Quwt Jabal al Sheikh "Union of fighters of Jabal al Sheikh". They are mainly drawn from local fighters from the area.

With the army and Iranian backed offensive widening, the rebels have called on youths to enlist as mosque imams in Beit Jin called on people to take up arms and fight the army.

Rebels still have a sizeable presence in central and southern Quneitra, in the Syrian Golan Heights.

Western diplomatic sources say the crushing of the Sunni rebel presence in areas they have been in since 2013 will allow Lebanon's Hezbollah to open another secure arms supply line from its border in southern Lebanon into Syria.

Since the beginning of the conflict in Syria, Iran has had a growing presence in the country, deploying thousands of Shi'ite fighters who have fought against both mainstream Sunni rebel groups and more militant groups.—Reuters ■

Trump's Christmas wish: 'We've got prosperity. Now we want peace'

PALM BEACH, Fla. — On Christmas Eve, US President Donald Trump took calls from children, asking them what they wanted most from Santa, and revealing what was on his own wish list.

One boy wanted building blocks. Another wished for his grandma to get out of the hospital. And as for Trump — who has sent a series of combative tweets since arriving at his Florida vacation home — he said he wants “peace for the country.”

“We’ve got prosperity — now we want peace,” Trump told a child named Ryan, who called the North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD) to check on Santa’s progress.

Every year on Christmas eve NORAD purports to track the flight of Santa and his reindeer-pulled sleigh, a tradition since 1955 when a department



US President Donald Trump. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

store misprinted a phone number, sending a flood of calls to a NORAD colonel, who played along.

Sitting in a gold chair be-

side first lady Melania Trump in an ornate, tapestried great room, the president enthusiastically chatted with youngsters and their parents. Reporters

in the room could hear only the president’s side of the conversation.

In his trademark brash style honed during a career

in the New York real estate world, Trump predicted the kids would have the greatest Christmas ever.

“I’ll make a prediction — Santa is going to treat you well. Really well. The best he’s ever treated you,” he told one child from Mississippi, throwing in an invitation to come to the Oval Office sometime.

Casper from Arlington, Virginia, was a child after Trump’s own heart. “Building blocks! That’s what I always liked too,” the president exclaimed.

“I predict that Santa will bring you building blocks, so many you won’t be able to use them all,” he said.

As for Ryan, he told Trump he wanted his grandmother to come home from the hospital.

“That is great. That’s better than asking for some toy or something,” Trump said.— Reuters ■

Israel regulator seeks to ban bitcoin firms from stock exchange

JERUSALEM — Israel’s markets regulator said on Monday he will propose regulation to ban companies based on bitcoin and other digital currencies from trading on the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange (TASE).

Shmuel Hauser, the chairman of the Israel Securities Authority (ISA), told the Calcalist business conference he will bring the proposal to the ISA board next week. If approved, it would be subject to a public hearing and then the TASE bylaws would need to be amended.

“If we have a company that their main business is digital currencies we would not allow it. If already listed, its trading will be suspended,” Hauser said, adding the ISA must find the appropriate regulation for such companies.

Bitcoin plunged by 30 percent to below \$12,000 on Friday as investors dumped the cryptocurrency after its sharp rise to nearly \$20,000. It recouped some losses to trade above \$14,000 on the Bitstamp platform, down 9 percent on the day.

“We feel that the prices of bitcoin behave like bubbles and

we don’t want investors to be subject to that volatility and uncertainty,” Hauser said. “There is an importance to signal to the market where things are... Investors should know where we stand.” Earlier this month, Hauser had said bitcoin-based companies would not be included in TASE indexes and that there was a need for a suitable regulatory framework for such instruments given that the global market value of all

digital currencies grew in 2017 to \$300 billion from \$18 billion.

The proposal will likely be the last for Hauser, who will step down next month after 6-1/2 years as ISA chief.

“But once it’s on its way it will continue to be pursued,” said Hauser, who will be replaced by Anat Guetta.

He said he hopes she will promote easing capital gains taxes and focus on regulatory enforcement.—Reuters ■



Tokens of the virtual currency Bitcoin are seen placed on a monitor that displays binary digits in this illustration picture on 8 December, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

US Treasury’s Mnuchin sent gift-wrapped box of horse manure — reports

WASHINGTON— A gift-wrapped package addressed to US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin’s home in a posh Los Angeles neighborhood that was suspected of being a bomb was instead filled with horse manure, police told local media.

The package was found Saturday evening in a next-door neighbor’s driveway in Bel Air, the Los Angeles Police Department told the Los Angeles Times and KNBC television, the NBC affiliate in Los Angeles. The package also included a Christmas card

with negative comments about President Donald Trump and the new US tax law signed by Trump last week. Reuters could not reach LAPD officials for comment on Sunday. An LAPD bomb squad X-rayed the package before opening it and found the horse manure inside, police told local media.

Aerial footage from KNBC showed officers investigating a large box in wrapping paper, then dumping a large amount of what they later identified as the manure and opening the card that was included inside.—Reuters ■

Driver rams German party headquarters in apparent suicide bid

BERLIN — A man drove a car at the entrance of the Berlin headquarters of Germany’s Social Democratic Party (SPD) late on Sunday evening, lightly injuring himself in what police said was an apparent suicide attempt. Police said the car, which crashed through the first set of glass doors of Willy Brandt House, the SPD’s headquarters, was laden with petrol canisters and

gas cartridges. The building’s sprinkler system extinguished the resulting blaze.

Authorities did not identify the man, saying only that he was 58 years old. It was unclear why he had chosen the SPD, which is about to start negotiations on governing for another four years in coalition with Chancellor Angela Merkel’s conservatives, as his target.—Reuters ■

Japan foreign minister embarks on Middle East tour

JERUSALEM — Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Kono arrived in Israel on Monday on the first leg of a Middle East tour that will also take him to Palestine, following US President Donald Trump's controversial decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

During his six-day tour, Kono is expected to tell both sides that Japan does not agree with the US decision and urge them to move the peace process forward, according to Foreign Ministry sources.

Kono's second trip to the region in less than a month follows Trump's announcement that the United States is recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and will transfer the US Embassy there from Tel Aviv.

In Jerusalem on Monday, Kono is scheduled to meet with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and other officials.

Later in the day, Kono is expected to visit Ramallah, the administrative capital of the Palestinian authority in the West Bank, where Palestinian protesters and Israeli troops have clashed since Trump's announcement. A meeting with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas is also being arranged. —Kyodo News ■

Chinese foreign minister pledges better diplomacy for China, world development



Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi. PHOTO: XINHUA

BEIJING — Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi has pledged better diplomatic work to serve the development of China and the world.

As the largest developing country, the diplomatic work of China should serve the creation of a better external environment for the country's modernization, Wang said in an interview with journalists of the People's Daily, the flagship newspaper of the Communist Party of China (CPC).

"On the other hand, we also need to take our international responsibilities and make new contributions to the development and progress of humanity," he said in the interview, which was published in the Monday edition of the newspaper.

Wang said China will make every possible effort to host the Boao Forum for Asia, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit, the Forum for China-Africa Cooperation and the China International Import Expo next year to "open a new chapter" for win-win cooperation between China and other countries.

He also said China will promote the healthy development of China-US relations, maintain high-level strategic coordination with Russia, consolidate the sound momentum for relations with European countries, and work to build a framework for major-country relations featuring overall stability and balanced development.

He said China will deepen its friendship with neighbors and seek political settlement regarding issues such as the Korean peninsula and Afghanistan.

Wang said that in 2018, China will implement the results reached at the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation and put in place mechanisms to boost cooperation.

The foreign minister said China will also participate in global governance, make economic globalization more open, inclusive and beneficial to more people, and advance international cooperation in responding to climate change and fighting terrorism.

Moreover, he said China will participate in making rules regarding emerging sectors, such as cyberspace and outer space, and will oppose all forms of protectionism.

To better serve the country's development, Wang said China will expedite communication and exchanges among Chinese and foreign personnel, improve consular services and explore building a safety network for overseas Chinese.—Xinhua ■

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST
THE DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation
NATIONAL COMMUNITY DRIVEN DEVELOPMENT PROJECT
IDA Grant H814-MM
Assignment Title: Township Level Technical Assistance

Ref No.	Township Clusters (TC) by Region/State	Number and name of the townships per cluster, beginning in March 2018	Potential expansion into additional townships in subsequent years
C5.03	Rakhine	2 Townships: Ponnagyun and Gwa	to be defined
C5.05	Shan	1 Township: Mongkhet	to be defined
C5.08	Bago	1 Township: Thegon	to be defined

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar has received financing from the World Bank to implement the National Community Driven Development Project (NCDD) under the Department of Rural Development (DRD) of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation. The Government intends to apply part of the financing to hire consulting services for Township Technical Assistance (TTA) for new townships to be covered starting in year five of project implementation, e.g. around April 2018.

The TTA consulting services (the "Services") include:

- Assisting township DRD offices in planning, implementing and monitoring project activities in the respective townships in line with the procedures contained in the Project Operations Manual and directions received from the DRD union office.
- Assisting villages and village tracts in (i) the preparation and annual revision of development plans; (ii) sub-project technical design, cost estimation, review and approval; (iii) sub-project implementation, including adherence to environmental and social safeguards outlined in the Project Operations Manual, procurement of labor and materials and supervision during implementation; and (iv) organization of annual social audits.
- Assisting village tract project support committees to manage project funds in a transparent and accountable manner.
- Where applicable, providing technical support as needed to existing project townships within the State/ Region.

The Services will be procured in three separate contracts, covering the geographic areas outlined above and are scheduled to start at the township level in April 2018, for two years. Depending on performance, project needs and the availability of funding as will be assessed at the end of these two years, the contract may be extended for another two years. Based on the same criteria, the contract may also be increased into additional townships of which the number remains to be determined.

The consultant teams will be based in the township(s) and include five full time experts: (i) team leader/training specialist, (ii) finance officer, (iii) procurement officer, (iv) monitoring and evaluation officer, (v) communication/social accountability/gender officer. Furthermore, there may be short-term inputs by a national CDD program advisor and by an international CDD expert to support the township team. In addition, the Consultant will also recruit locally community facilitators and technical facilitators to be based in the indicated township(s). This team shall be in place for a first contractual period of two years starting expectedly from March 2018 with the mission to support all aspects of the implementation of the NCDD Project and to upgrade the capacity of the local DRD offices in the townships concerned.

The Department of Rural Development now invites eligible consulting firms or NGOs ("Consultants") to indicate their interest in providing these TTA services. Interested Consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services in one or more of the township clusters mentioned. Consultants may associate with other NGOs/firms in the form of a joint venture or a sub-consultancy to enhance their qualifications.

Expressions of Interest must be submitted in a written but preferably electronic form to the address below by **MONDAY 16 January 2018** and clearly indicate the township cluster(s) in which the Consultant is interested.

Following a review of Expressions of Interest, DRD will invite short-listed consultants to prepare full proposals. Consultants will be selected in accordance with the QBS method set out in the Consultant Guidelines. Contracts will be structured primarily as lump sum payments against agreed outputs. The short-listing criteria are:

- Past experience with community based development activities in similar conditions as in Myanmar, with prior experience in Myanmar desirable;
- Size of relevant assignment contracts over the past five years.

Further information and detailed sample terms of reference may be obtained from the NCDD Project webpage: <http://www.cdd.drdmyanmar.org> or the address below during office hours from 09h00 to 16h00, Monday through Friday, except public holidays.

Attn:
Mr.Kyaw Soe, Deputy Director General
NCDD Project Secretariat,
Department of Rural Development, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation,
Office No.14, Nay Pyi Taw.
Telephone Number: (+95-67) 409071
Fax Number: (+95-67) 409431
E-mail: unioncddprocurement@gmail.com



Britain's Queen Elizabeth is seen sitting at a desk in the 1844 Room after recording her Christmas Day broadcast to the Commonwealth, in Buckingham Palace, in this undated photograph received in London, Britain on 24 December, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Queen praises husband's humour in Christmas message

LONDON — Britain's Queen Elizabeth will pay tribute to her husband Prince Philip in her Christmas message, and praise his "support and unique sense of humour".

The 96-year-old prince, also known as the Duke of Edinburgh, has been at the queen's side throughout her 65 years on the throne, and has regularly grabbed the headlines with his off-colour comments.

He retired from regular royal duties over the summer, but has continued to make occasional appearances, most recently walking to the Christmas Eve church service on the royal family's Sandringham estate.

The queen will also talk about the importance of home

in her message, and the sense of community in London and Manchester after the capital's devastating Grenfell Tower fire and the militant attacks in both cities. "We think of our homes as place of warmth, familiarity and love ... there is a timeless simplicity to the pull of home," she will say, according to excerpts from her speech released by Buckingham Palace.

"This Christmas, I think of London and Manchester, whose powerful identities shone through over the past 12 months in the face of appalling attacks," she will add in the message which will be broadcast at 1500 GMT. Elizabeth, the world's longest reigning monarch, very rarely talks about her husband.

On their golden wedding anniversary in 1997, she said he did not take easily to compliments but had been her "strength and stay all these years". Philip, who has carried out more than 22,000 solo engagements, developed a reputation for his comments, including his remark about "slitty eyes" on a visit to China in the 1980s. In the following decade, he said "Aren't most of you descended from pirates?" to an islander in the Cayman Islands and asked a driving instructor in Scotland: "How do you keep the natives off the booze long enough to pass the test?"

The seasonal royal message dates back to King George V in 1932 and was first televised 60 years ago in 1957. — Reuters ■

Jennifer Lawrence visits children's hospital on Christmas

LOS ANGELES — Keeping up with her annual tradition over holidays, Jennifer Lawrence has visited a children's hospital in her hometown of Louisville, Kentucky.

The 27-year-old actor visited Norton's Children's Hospital on Christmas eve.

The medical facility took to its official Instagram, where they thanked Lawrence for taking some time out of her busy schedule and celebrating the holiday season with the kids.

"Louisville's own Jennifer

Lawrence stopped by Norton Children's today to visit with patients, families, and staff.

"This visit has become a tradition for Lawrence each Christmas.

Thank you, Jennifer! You sure do bring a smile to all!" the post read, alongside the "mother!" actor's picture at the hospital.

Lawrence has visited the same medical centre over the Christmas holiday every year since 2013, when it was named Kosair Children's Hospital, E! Online reported. — PTI ■



Actors dressed as storm troopers stand in formation at the European Premiere of 'Star Wars: The Last Jedi', at the Royal Albert Hall in central London, Britain on 12 December, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

"Star Wars: The Last Jedi" dominates North American box office for second weekend

LOS ANGELES — The Force of "Star Wars: The Last Jedi" continued to dominate the North American box office for a second weekend in a row, raking an estimated 68.48 million US dollars.

Disney's release of Lucas-film's "Star Wars: The Last Jedi" is on track to take in a whopping 365.1 million dollars through Sunday and 397.3 million dollars through Christmas Day. Combined with an estimated international cume of 380.3 million dollars, the epic space opera's global cume stands at a mighty 745.4 million dollars through Sunday, according to the studio figures collected by comScore.

Directed by Rian Johnson, the eighth installment in the "Star Wars" saga follows Rey as she



Actors dressed as storm troopers stand in formation at the European Premiere of 'Star Wars: The Last Jedi', at the Royal Albert Hall in central London, Britain on 12 December, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

receives Jedi training from Luke Skywalker in hopes of turning the tide for the Resistance in the continued fight against Kylo Ren and the First Order.

Sony's action adventure comedy film "Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle" opened in second place with an estimated 34 million dollars through Sunday and 47.5 million dollars through Christmas Day.

Directed by Jake Kasdan and stars Dwayne Johnson, Jack Black, Kevin Hart and Karen Gillan, the sequel to 1995's "Jumanji" follows four teenagers who are transported into the video game world of Jumanji and must work together to beat the game in order to return to the real world. —Xinhua ■

Indian girls orphaned by tsunami, saved by soccer

CUDDALORE, (India) — When the Cuddalore district in the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu was devastated by a massive tsunami on 26 December, 2004, many lives were lost — and even more lives were changed forever.

For a group of girls from impoverished families studying at a local government school, the way forward seems made for a Bollywood film, its plot a cross between *Slum Dog Millionaire* and *Bend It Like Beckham*.

What kept them moving on was the sport of soccer, and their coach Subramanian Mariappan, a retired school headmaster. On the 13th anniversary of the tsunami, this group is celebrated for producing a corps of athletes who now play on the national women's soccer team, representing India at competitions like the South Asian football games.

Mariappan was the physical education teacher at a government school in Cuddalore, where he coached the boy's soccer team, when some girls asked to play as well.

"These girls used to peek from the classroom windows while I trained the boys. I was a very strict teacher and nobody dared to talk to me, but one day some of the girls approached me saying that they also wanted to play this sport," recalls Mariappan, now 64.

But in the wake of the 2004 tsunami, Mariappan took responsibility for not only training a big group of girls from poor families in soccer, but even supporting them as his own family members.

Many of the girls were orphaned when the 2004 tsunami

struck Cuddalore, located on the coast of the Bay of Bengal about 20 kilometres south of Puducherry, the former French colonial settlement known as Pondicherry.

It's believed the name Cuddalore comes from the Tamil word "koodalur," meaning confluence, which explains why the damage there was so severe from the tsunami triggered by a massive 9.1 magnitude earthquake hours earlier off the west coast of Sumatra, Indonesia.

The earthquake was one of the largest ever recorded, and the tsunami it created swept away entire communities around the Indian Ocean, including along the southern coast of India and the nearby island nation of Sri Lanka.

The town of Cuddalore is straddled by two rivers, the Then Pennai and the Gadilam, providing natural pathways for the tsunami to penetrate far inland.

After the tsunami, the girls lived at a government home for the poor, but could only stay there through the senior secondary grade of school, or grades 11 and 12 when students are typically 16 to 17-year-olds.

"Their dedication to football (as soccer is called in the former British colony) motivated me to take responsibility for them," Mariappan recalls matter-of-factly. "I used to spend all my salary on them. Now after retirement, I receive a pension somewhere around \$457, which helps me take care of them."

And there were others around Cuddalore who also stepped up to take care of the 33 girls.—Kyodo News ■



Photo taken in Cuddalore, India on December 21, 2017 shows players practicing for the tournament in Madhya Pradesh. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**



in
Picture

A man decorates a 210 feet-long (64 meters) cake during Christmas celebrations at a consumer fair in Chandigarh, India on 25 December, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Japan-Indonesia art project connects tsunami-hit Aceh, Tohoku



Japanese artist Takashi Murakami (standing) poses with local students after planting Jeumpa tree in Banda Aceh, Indonesia on 22 December, 2017. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

BANDA ACEH, (Indonesia) — A group of colorfully dressed girls performed an energetic traditional welcome dance for Japanese artist Takashi Murakami, who was visiting their elementary school in Banda Aceh, the capital of Indonesia's westernmost province of Aceh, for a tree-planting event on Friday morning.

After planting trees with other volunteers in 16 locations in the Tohoku area of northeastern Japan that was devastated by a tsunami in March 2011, Murakami came to Aceh, which experienced an even worse tsunami in December 2004, to do the same.

But instead of planting cherry trees, or "sakura," as part of

the Sakura 3-11 Project that he co-founded, he and the Acehese students planted champak trees, locally known as jeumpa, whose fragrant flowers are popular in Aceh, just like sakura blossoms are in Japan.

Right after the planting, he handed off a sakura baton, such as used in a relay race, to one of the students, while noting it is the 17th school he has visited to plant trees and the first outside of Tohoku. "By seeing the planted sakura trees, it is expected that it will remind the later generation about the story of the tsunami experienced by the previous generation," he said. "Just like sakura planted in Tohoku, jeumpa will also remind the current and future

generation of Aceh about lessons from tsunami in the past," he said. The school in Baro village of Meuraxa subdistrict, located only some 2 kilometres away from the coast, was selected by the Sakura 3-11 Project because it was flattened to the ground by the tsunami on 26 December, 2004 that killed more than 160,000 people in Aceh Province alone.

Of the school's 180 students then, only 15 survived, according to Anshari Yahya, a former village official whose granddaughter was one of the dancers who welcomed Murakami.

In 2008, the school was rebuilt and now it has 272 students, some of whose parents and grandparents are tsunami survivors.—Kyodo News ■

Liverpool skipper Henderson out of Swansea clash with injury



Liverpool's Jordan Henderson. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

LONDON—Liverpool midfielder Jordan Henderson will miss Tuesday's Premier League game against Swansea City due to a hamstring injury, manager Juergen Klopp has said. Henderson, 27, was replaced by James Milner in the early stages of Friday's 3-3 draw with Arsenal and Klopp is concerned

that the England international could be ruled out for a chunk of Liverpool's busy festive season schedule. "The problem is that Hendo will not feature for sure, he is out," Klopp told the club's website. — Reuters ■

Robinho to play on despite rape conviction

RIO DE JANEIRO — Former Brazil international forward Robinho plans to continue playing in 2018 despite being convicted of rape. An Italian court last month sentenced Robinho to nine years in prison for participating in the 2013 gang rape of a woman in Milan.

The punishment will not be enforced until the appeal process ends but Brazil does not allow for the extradition of

its citizens, meaning Robinho would only risk being arrested if he left his home country.

The 33-year-old, who pleaded not guilty to the charges, said he would weigh up offers from interested clubs after parting ways with Brazilian Serie A side Atletico Mineiro.

"Honestly, I haven't made up my mind," the former Real Madrid, Manchester City and AC Milan player told reporters

on Sunday. "First I'm going to turn off the telephone and have a break. I want to rest with my family because the holiday period is short." Earlier, player agent Marisa Alija confirmed Robinho had opted not to renew his contract with Atletico Mineiro, whom he joined in February 2016. "Atletico gave us a deadline to respond and we couldn't do that within the given time-frame," Alija said.—Xinhua ■

Wilshere looking to seal regular first-team spot at Arsenal

LONDON — Arsenal midfielder Jack Wilshere is targeting a regular spot in the starting line-up for Premier League games following his solid performance in Friday's 3-3 draw with Liverpool, the England international has said.

The 25-year-old, who started all but one of Arsenal's Europa League fixtures so far, marked his third consecutive league start of the season against the Merseyside club after five previous appearances as a substitute.

"I feel good and I have said for ages that I want to be playing in the Premier League," Wilshere told British media.

"I've played a lot of games in the Europa League and built my fitness up.

"I was patient and we've now got a few injuries and I've managed to get a few games in but I am happy and I want to stay in the team now.

"It's a busy schedule over Christmas. There are a lot of games where we are going to need all of the squad so I am happy."

The draw at the Emirates left Arsenal in sixth position, behind Tottenham Hotspur on goal difference, ahead of Thursday's trip to 16th-placed Crystal Palace. —Reuters ■



Arsenal's Jack Wilshere. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Lukaku proves he can offer more than just goals for United

LONDON — Manchester United have created fewer chances than Southampton in the Premier League this season, but after Romelu Lukaku's performance as a creator against Leicester City, Jose Mourinho may have found a new way for United to stay in the title race.

United made a blistering start to the season, winning four of their opening five league games, scoring 16 goals in the process, with the attack spearheaded by new striker Lukaku.

However, after scoring

in his first nine games in all competitions, the goals have dried up for the Belgian, with Mourinho's side now trailing league leaders Manchester City by 13 points.

United welcome Burnley to Old Trafford in the league on Tuesday with a busy festive schedule kicking in — the perfect time for Lukaku to have found a new facet to his game when not scoring.

On Saturday, the striker fulfilled an unfamiliar role, with no other player at the King Power Stadium creating



Manchester United's Romelu Lukaku. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

more chances for team mates.

"Lukaku's role has been different," former United defender Gary Neville said. "The chances that he has created should have killed the game off. His contribution will please Mourinho."

Lukaku created two big chances for Martial and Jesse Lingard with defence-splitting passes, but both were not converted which cost United as Leicester snatched a last-gasp point.

Such profligacy against Burnley would mean that United's hold on second place in the standings would be under threat, as Chelsea lurk three points behind in third.

Paul Pogba has five assists to his name despite having played just nine Premier League games, but such ability on the ball makes him a marked man. Lukaku, on the other hand, is a relative unknown in the creativity department. Having created just three big chances all season prior to Saturday, Lukaku proved he can adapt his game to give Mourinho more options.

Over a busy festive period, where any slip up by runaway leaders Manchester City could see United at least put pressure on their rivals, Lukaku could silence his doubters in other ways than just scoring goals.—Reuters ■